The

Non-Subscribing Presbyterian

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Notes of the Month.

The inaugural meeting of the Social Service Union, held in the Central Hall, Belfast, last month, proved a great success. The speeches were interesting and very much to the point. We learned not only what such a Union might accomplish in connection with our Non-Subscribing Church, but we also heard of good practical things accomplished by our brethren across the water. The period of experimentation has passed and the Union has done excellent service in connection with some of our English Congregations. But not the least thing in its favour is the fact that it unites the members of our own body with those of other religious bodies doing similar work. One gratifying instrument of this larger union of Churches is the Summer School which has met at Swanwick for the last few years. Now that the war is over, its temporarily-suspended sessions will be resumed during the coming summer—from June 21 to June 30—and we hope then it may be possible for our newly-founded Union to have representation thereat. But in the meantime it is desirable that all who are in sympathy with the objects of the Union should enrol themselves as members. Enrolment forms and all particulars may be obtained from the Rev. E. H. Pickering.

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It is gratifying to know that public opinion in Ireland is now being aroused concerning its admittedly inadequate provision for primary and even for secondary education. It augurs well for a needed improvement when public bodies like the Belfast Chamber of Commerce are now giving the matter very careful attention. No form of social service is more important than that which touches so nearly the young life of the community. Inadequate school accommodation, small and imperfectly-equipped buildings, the lack in many cases of proper playgrounds—all these and other serious drawbacks really exist. Further, the remuneration of the teachers is much less than it should be, even before increased cost of living came to make the disparity disgraceful. Then there should be provision made for education after the present leaving-school age is attained. Continuation schools are now essential, not alone for intellectual, but also for moral, reasons. The age of adolescence is the most important and critical time in the development of the young, and yet that is the period which our present system leaves most unguarded and unprovided for. In England and Scotland a vast deal is now being done in

this respect, and the large firms have already made appointments to secure for the young people in their employment satisfactory moral, as well as technical, supervision. Until we do that in Ireland social wastage will continue, and our so-called education leave off when in reality it should most usefully be confirmed and continued.

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The critical condition of the affairs of the Transylvanian Unitarians has caused grave concern to their friends and sympathisers here and in England and America. For many years the ties that bound Hungarians of our faith to their British brethren were strong and sure. Their young men had studied at our English theological colleges, while members of our British Congregations had visited Hungary and been received with the most generous and unstinted hospitality. While the recent war temporarily dimmed the relations of the two communities, we do not think it really weakened their actual spiritual strength and character. Certainly the thought that long-established and dearly-bought religious liberties are imperilled makes us gravely concerned for our Hungarian fellow-worshippers, who, like ourselves, have ever contended for religious freedom and toleration. Nor can we remain unmoved when we learn that venerable Bishop Joseph Ferencz, so long the vigorous and revered head of the Unitarian Church in Transylvania, is, with other leading Protestants, held as hostage by the Roumanian authorities in their newly-acquired province. We cannot but feel and strongly hope that the efforts now being made on his and his people's behalf will result in a complete reversal of the policy of intolerance, and lead to the satisfactory solution of full liberty of opinion for all believers.

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We would again remind the Local Treasurers and Collectors for the Orphan Society that all subscriptions should be paid in to the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. A. Kennedy Stewart, before March 31st, and that the Secretary, the Rev. A. Turner, requires possession of the list of subscribers by the same date.

WHAT THINK YE OF THE CHRIST?

What think ye of the Christ? is the deepest and most urgent question which humanity can ask. It is more than likely that there will ever be many who see in Jesus the last fact and act of God in the immanental order, while very many others see in him something more than the perfect flower and fruit of the long line of development from nebula to man. The latest life of Christ, by "An Unknown Disciple," leaves ordinary theology severely alone. It is a picturesque presentation of the human Christ, and the reading of it leaves upon the mind a vivid impression of a character of unfailing magnetism, wisdom, and love. It is written as a personal contemporary narrative—a story of Jesus by an eye-witness that is reverently realistic. There is a celtic imagination combined with culture and scholarship shining through all the pictures in this Oriental Gallery. The authoress (one of the only lives of Christ that we have read by a woman), if we mistake not, comes from Ulster, combining Roman Catholic and Methodist blood in her veins, and is the wife of a Cambridge man of nobility, but "By an Unknown Disciple" being published anonymously, we have tried to read those autobiographical chapters as the sincere impressions formed by one who was constantly with the Master. There is a sureness of touch and a wonderful gift of presenting the background to each scene which leaves a mental imprint on the mind as if it had been received through the retina. What a fine sermon there is in the answer Jesus gave to a question John put to him, as recorded by her:—"No man who lives up to his light fears to face the truth." This modest volume gives helpful interpretation to many of the difficult sayings of Jesus, and is worthy of careful reading.

"We believe in Christ our Brother, loftiest soul the world has known,
In whose bosom, as in ours, God our Father finds His throne;
That His Truth and His Example stand as beacons ever more,

And by living as He taught us, all shall reach
the heavenly shore ;
That we build while here those mansions read
of far beyond the skies,
And that Righteousness and Character are the
keys to heaven's prize."

G. V. C.

THE RHINE IN LEGEND AND HISTORY.

Lecture by Rev. H. J. Rossington.

A very interesting and instructive lecture on the above subject was delivered in the Central Hall, Rosemary Street, on 15th January, by Rev. H. J. Rossington, M.A., B.D., the proceeds of which were devoted by Mrs. Rossington and himself to the aid of the Lord Roberts' Memorial Workshop. There was a large and appreciative audience. In the course of his remarks the lecturer said he intended to deal with that part of the Rhine from Cologne to Constance, while the period of history on which he proposed to touch covered from the time of the Cæsars to the Kaiser. In this period they had the settlement of the Roman legions on the banks of the Rhine, and the Roman settlements that grew up around those military centres. Some very interesting Roman remains were found in many of these places, and among them were the magnificent remains of Treves. Next came the Franks, who, under King Clovis, held places like Cologne, which were later taken from them and absorbed again into the Empire. Charlemagne also had strong places on the Rhine, and during his sway they became increasingly important. Among them were Cologne, Coblenz, Mayence, Spires, Worms, and Strasburg. Here the lecturer touched slightly on the changing fortunes of the Rhine towns in the campaigns of Louis XIV., and later during the Napoleonic wars. After 1813 these centres came again into the possession of the Germans. To-day war was once more changing the aspect of things, and with British troops holding watch at Cologne, American troops holding watch at Coblenz, and French troops holding watch at Mayence, further startling chapters had been added to the history of the Rhine towns. All through the lecture was attractively illustrated by a large array of beautiful limelight views, which were explained, with many appropriate historical references. Special interest was taken in dealing with Roland's Castle, the Dregnis Rock, and other outstanding features of the country on both sides of the river, and not the least entertaining part of his remarks were allusions to the beautiful legends associated with those monuments of antiquity. A collection was taken up on behalf of the fund referred to, after which Mr. Rossington thanked the lanternist, Mr. George Hill, and his assistant, Mr. Wm. M'Cafferty, for the skilful manner in which they had handled the slides.

SOCIAL SERVICE NOTES.

INAUGURAL MEETING OF THE SOCIAL SERVICE UNION.

The opinion was freely expressed that rarely has there been such an inspiring meeting in connection with the Non-Subscribing Church as that held in the Central Hall on Wednesday, 19th Feb. The attendance was good, but, considering the quality of the speeches and the importance of the occasion, an attendance crowding the Hall to its utmost capacity would not have been too large. Before the meeting began there was a brief and pleasant social gathering in the Chess Room, where Miss Montgomery had kindly provided tea and refreshments. The Moderator, Rev. A. Turner, took the chair a few minutes after the prescribed time, and opened brightly with a story about the lady chaffeur's reply to General Pershing, who complained that she was two minutes late. "Why?" she said, "You are two years late." This Union for Social Service, said the Moderator, was many years late. In accordance with the principles of our Church, it should have been in existence years ago. Proceeding, he struck the note which dominated the meeting by stressing the fact that our Church was not a

mere ethical society, but a religious society founded on the personality of Jesus Christ. The greatest social servant was the Lord Jesus, and he considered that any Church which did not take up some form or other of social service was not doing its duty.

He was followed by Mrs. J. Glynn Davies, of Banbridge. This was the first time that Mrs. Davies had appeared on a public platform in our midst, and we hope it will not be the last, for she is an accomplished speaker, with a real understanding of social needs. Her subject was: "The Church and its Social Duties," and most clearly did she make her main point, which was that the State, working alone, was not capable of effecting any fundamental reforms, because ultimately the well-being of society depended on moral and spiritual forces. She instanced infantile mortality and the general deterioration of the nation as evils which could not be effectively overcome until men and women were delivered from the abuse of sex and the abuse of drink. Here the Church should have its say, stressing, among other things, the importance of voting rather for political candidates with reference to their moral character and principles than their party programmes. She concluded by saying that, in addition to all the social work a Church ought to do, its most hopeful opportunities lay with the Sunday Schools, which should be made more attractive, and where talks about the facts of life to the elder scholars should be a definite feature of religious instruction.

Rev. H. H. Johnson, B.A. (Secretary of the National Conference Union for Social Service, England), who spoke next, had made a special journey from England in order to inform the meeting of the working of a Social Service Union. He referred to the twelve years he spent as Secretary of the Moral Education League, and said that eventually he was driven to the conclusion that there can be no proper education, no lasting social reconstruction, apart from deep underlying religious principles and a living personality such as that of Jesus Christ. It was as a Christian that he was moved with a zeal for social service, and in Christian principles he saw the only hope for good and permanent results. Instancing several cases of the lack of moral principle in legislation, he went on to say that one of the most fruitful results of the Churches intervening in social problems would be that eventually the barriers between the different sects would be broken down, and all the Christian forces in the community could unite in initiating social reforms which went to the rock bottom of the matter. Two fundamental Christian principles are the inestimable value of every human being, and that every one had an immortal soul which must be nurtured for an eternal destiny. The application of these two principles would transform the whole of social life. Moreover, every Christian Church accepted them, and thus the way was clear for interdenominational co-operation. Originally the Union for Social Service which he represented was the outcome of a desire to express practically the religious principles of the Churches in England and Wales akin to the Non-Subscribing Church of Ireland. Its aim was to educate its members on social problems and to stimulate them in social service. But they soon found, as did the other Social Service Unions founded by the different denominations, that eventually their work went beyond the bounds of denominationalism. For instance, in the small town where he lived, there had been formed an interdenominational Committee which sat as a Christian Council, stimulating the Town Council in the performance of its duties and carrying out necessary pieces of social work which the secular authorities could not do. That interdenominational Committee, he could almost confidently assert, was on the verge of being duplicated in towns and cities all over England, for a small Committee had been formed, with the Bishop of Oxford at its head, and including every denomination from Roman Catholics to Unitarians for the purpose of amalgamating all the Christian forces in the work of social reconstruction. He had

the honour to be a member of that Committee. Even so, from the Union which the Non-Subscribing Church of Ireland were that night inaugurating, he saw possibilities, indeed the only possibilities, of some day uniting the Protestants and Catholics of this country. He entreated those present to strengthen the hands of the Hon.Secretary, Mr. Pickering, by joining the Union and taking an active part in its work and deliberations.

Mr. Johnson's able and delightful speech led to some interesting questions, and then Mr. R. C. Ferguson, M.A., LL.B., Secretary of the Belfast C.O.S. and Children's Aid Society, delivered an invaluable address on "Social Service Work Close at Hand." Speaking as one who was not a member of our Church, and from the layman's point of view, he declared that no real social service work could be rendered by any Church which took it up from selfish motives, that is, with the desire to strengthen itself by taking up a popular thing. Provided that the members of this new Union for Social Service were actuated by the sole desire to apply their Christian principles to the test of social needs, he foresaw for it a great future. It could supply trained voluntary workers to the various branches of social work, and could conduct inquiries into existing evils and call public attention to them. As instances where both practical and educational work was urgently needed he mentioned the employment of children, which, despite Acts of Parliament, still continued in this City in a scandalous way: Child Care Committees, which were still non-existent; after care work in connection with the Corporation Health Visitors and the Tuberculosis Institute, and so on. Even leaving aside new legislation, they could do enormous things by the mere administration of existing Acts of Parliament.

The usual votes of thanks followed, and a most inspiring meeting was concluded by the Moderator pronouncing the Benediction. The effect of the speeches was shown by a considerable number of the audience giving their names as members before they left the hall.

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Another meeting will be held on Wednesday, 19th March, at 8 p.m., in the Central Hall, when Mr. Alex. Wilson, J.P., will give a lecture on "Town Planning."

The Hon. Secretary, Rev. E. H. Pickering, would be very pleased to receive invitations to visit our various country Churches with a view to laying the plans of the Union before them and organising local groups for social study and service.

LESSON NOTES FOR TEACHERS.

[To be used in accordance with the Scheme o Instruction for 1919, issued by the Sunday Schoo Committee of the N.S.P.C.I.]

March 2nd. The Little Child (*Humility*). Read Matthew xviii. 1-14. Key text, Matthew xviii. 3.

1. *Who shall be greatest?* As in the parable of the cup, we find the disciples are again concerned with the question which of them will be greatest in the kingdom of heaven. These men, much as they loved Jesus, kept forgetting the meaning of his message in their desire to get a good position. They forget the service due from them in their anxiety to have others serve them. It is this selfish desire to be greatest that keeps folk from being really helpful and useful. What we ought to aim at is each to do his best, trying to be great in what we can do for others rather than in being great in making others do things for us. For instance, in a band, true harmony is attained when every instrumentalist does his best, whether he play the flute, the fiddle, or the big drum. In one band the man who played the big drum thought that he was the greatest; so on one occasion the rest of the band slipped off down a side street, and then everybody laughted to see nothing in the band but the big drum. Thus the drummer learnt that other folk were as great as he. Again, in Christianity greatness does not consist in size, wealth, or position. A big piece of rock is very

small in value compared with a tiny diamond; so is a big, selfish proud boy compared with a small boy who has a generous helpful heart. Christian greatness consists in willingness to help—in our value as good men and women.

2. *The little child* (key text). The greatness of a little child consists in its humility, that is, its readiness to learn and willingness to obey the call of duty. Every truly great man must, first of all, be as a little child; he must be humble. He must be trustful, not conceited; helpful, not selfish; eager to learn, not self-satisfied. We all know that Sir Isaac Newton was one of the greatest scientists; but he was great, because he never thought too much of himself and of what he knew. He said that he was like a child on the seashore who had picked up a few pebbles cast up by the vast sea of knowledge. It is said also that the great Roman Emperor Augustus used to dress up as a beggar so that he could move about amongst his people and learn their needs. He humbled himself so that he might be more worthy to rule.

3. *Jesus' love for little children.* From one lesson Jesus proceeds to another, viz., the importance of the young and weak. Everyone who wished to be really great in the kingdom will be kind and tender to even the weakest child. Many folk foolishly think that they show themselves great when they bully the weak; whereas, on the contrary, the really great will prove their strength by using it to uplift and cherish the weak. Moreover, every one of these is equally important to God, who loves us all and has set a guardian angel to watch over every precious soul. He who selfishly uses others for his own purposes has the whole host of heaven against him, and will, in God's good time, be overthrown and cast out. Let us refrain from being stumbling blocks. If anything stands in the way of our being good and helpful, any selfish desire or any evil thought, we must cast it out.

4. *The parable of the lost sheep.* This forms a lesson by itself. All we need note here is that God is most concerned to help the weak rather than the strong, and that those who are strong and clever have had their strength and cleverness given them in order to help the foolish and weak.

March 9th. The two sons (*Repentance*). Read Matthew xxi. 28-32. Key text, Luke xv. 10.

1. *The story.* In the few words of this parable is summed up the story of what is happening in innumerable lives. We all knows boys and girls, men and women, like the second son. Oftentimes they are bright, clever, attractive people, ready enough to say anything that is pleasant, but very slow to carry out their promises. They have felt God's call to go work in the vineyard (which means to do each his own proper work to make the world happier and better), they give a good impression to those about them, who rely on them to do great things, and then, when it comes to the point, they do nothing. "You wait and see what I will do," they say, and we wait and see in vain. They find it so much easier just to go about their own selfish business and pleasure, and in their own comfort forget about the great task which God expects them to perform. To a great extent many religious people belong to this class. They worship God, sing hymns to His praise, pray that they may do His will, come to church regularly, and are very careful to give no offence. But talking and promising do not mean doing the will of God. Therefore, no matter how pleasant they are, nor how obliging and respectable they appear, they are real failures. "Be ye doers of the Word" is the advice all boys and girls should follow. Yet these "talkers" get far less blame than those who are like the first son in the story. It was certainly wrong of the first son not to have been obliging from the first. But, says Jesus, what really matters with God is not what we say, but what we do. This son made a bad start, but he redeemed it by repentance. He changed his mind, and did the work. Here is a lesson for us all. Many a time we too make a bad start—we say "shan't" to our parents or friends—and then we are inclined to continue in that disagreeable spirit

because we don't like changing our minds. But when anyone loves us, as God indeed loves us, then he will be only too delighted when we come and say, "I am very sorry; I'll do what I ought." We must be willing to repent. No matter how selfishly and blindly we have acted, if we repent and decide to be more unsefish and noble in the future, we shall be welcomed as those who do God's will. Much misery and trouble would be avoided if only we would bring ourselves to say, "I'm sorry" when we have offended our friends or disobeyed the will of God.

2. *The application of the story.* Jesus gave a great shock to these respectable, polite, and church-going people, who, despite all their talking, do nothing for the world. For he said that they stood less chance of heaven than those they called the sinful and wicked folk. For these sinful and wicked folk were not so foolish as to think that they were good, and in many cases all they needed was a little encouragement, and they would repent and do better. Indeed it was the sinful and wicked folk who felt most keenly the desire to be good when they heard Jesus and John the Baptist preach. They repented, and said, "We have been very bad, but now we will really try to be better." See the key text. That is what Jesus wants: that is what God wants. He wants us to say that we're sorry and determined to be better. In so far as we try hard to do good and noble things God forgives us our fai ures and helps us to turn them into success.

Two Parables about the Divine nature. *March 16th. Asking for bread (God's providence).* Read Matthew vii. 7-12. Key text, Matthew vii. 12.

1. *Asking and seeking.* One of the first lessons we need to learn is that if we want a thing we must ask for it. All children soon find out how ready their parents are to give them what they ask for, Sometimes, however, they think that their parents have refused them. But we need to remember that good parents will not give their children what is bad for them, and children often make foolish requests. Thus if a child asked for bread his parent would give him bread; but if he asked for too much or for some food that would disagree with him, the parent would refuse, because that would be like giving him a stone—something that would make him ill. Again, if all our little whims and selfishnesses were gratified by our parents they would be giving us scorpions—things that would sting us and make us selfish and disagreeable. But the fact remains that, for the most part, children trust their parents, and come confidently to them whenever they are hungering or in trouble. Another form of asking is seeking. If we truly want a good and happy life we must not sit still with our hands folded, but must seek for it. Goodness and happiness await all those who seek. A good life is a treasure hidden in our work and play, our duties and pleasures: like a gold miner, we have to dig if we really want it.

2. *God our heavenly Father.* Says Jesus, "You trust your earthly parents to give you what is good: why not trust God, who is your heavenly parent?" The trouble is we have too little faith. Our earthly parents, even when they love us most devotedly, are often too ignorant, too poor, or too weak to do very much, and yet we turn confidently to them, because we can see them and feel them. Whereas, although God is all-loving, all-powerful and all-wise, and able to give us all that is good, we forget to turn to Him when we are in trouble because we cannot see Him and feel Him. Yet there are all around us unmistakable evidences of His work, that just a little faith will lead us to feel Him about us just like a mighty and tender Father, who causes the sun to shine, the rain to fall, and the earth to bring forth food, and who is for ever speaking to us through loving deeds and the voice of conscience. God is there, and if we ask Him He will sustain us and help u in all trouble and difficulty. But we cannot really obtain His help unless we ask for it. We must first of all believe that God is our Father, and then we must pray to "Our Father."

3. *The key text.* At first sight this seems to have no connection with the

parable, but a little thought will reveal to us that it is indeed the summing up of the parable. God is for ever doing good to us, helping us in ways that will make us better and nobler, because His first thought is to care for each of His children according to what each one exactly needs. In return, we must prove ourselves worthy by doing good to others, and we can only do real good if our aim is to treat them as we would have them treat us. If we were tired and hungry then we should want help and food; therefore if anyone else is tired and hungry we should give them help and food. Do not make the mistake of thinking, "O anything is good enough for others." If we would not like it, then it is not good enough for others.

March 23rd. The sparrow's fall (*God's Providence*). Read Matthew x. 24-33. Key text, Matthew x. 29.

1. *The occasion of the parable.* Jesus is preparing his followers for the hardships that may possibly be theirs. One of the greatest hardships is to find oneself left almost alone to suffer because of trying to do one's best. Many a great man has felt at times a strong temptation to give up a noble cause when he felt that he was giving himself great trouble and nobody cared. But, says Jesus, nothing is ever lost: none is ever forgotten. In many ways we act on this principle, *e.g.*, the soldier who is placed in a dangerous position goes on fighting even unto death, because he believes that his superior officer has placed him there and trusts him to stay there. Again, we throw a seed into the ground—maybe we let it fall accidentally. Yet the seed is not lost. Great forces are at work, and one day the seed is revealed as a fruitful plant. The same principle applies to our lives. We are placed here by God to grow and develop as His children, and everything we do and say that is good is a seed that God will watch over and bring to fruit. Like the soldier, we are "under orders." We are not forgotten. Each has a definite work to do, and it matters not how unimportant we are, or how much we are neglected. God will see us through.

2. *The Parable.* Jesus wished to make it perfectly clear that no one is forgotten, but that, on the contrary, God loves every individual one of us with an unfailing love. So He used the illustration of the sparrows—humble little feathered things! Few folk pay any regard to them, and when the poor Jewish working man wanted something for supper he could buy two little sparrows for the smallest coin he had. And yet, says Jesus, these sparrows play a part in God's scheme. He has made them, and He is by them when they fall. They are not forgotten. And if even the humble little sparrow cannot suffer without putting "all Heaven in a rage," is God likely to let us suffer without putting forth all his helpful strength to sustain us? We cannot be forgotten, because we have a work to do. There is a well-known story about a piccolo player which illustrates this point. As no doubt you know, the piccolo is one of the smallest instruments in a band, and this piccolo player had a very small part to play in a very big orchestral performance. He felt sleepy, and, persuading himself that nobody would miss him, dozed, only to be awakened by the conductor striking his baton and crying, "Where is that piccolo?" The conductor knew precisely the part the piccolo played in making the harmony of the piece complete, and therefore he did not forget the piccolo. So even the humblest of us is not forgotten by the great conductor, God, because He needs us all to "do our bit" if the world is to be harmonious and happy. Especially, says Jesus, have we to do our bit as Christians. We must never shirk any opportunity of doing Christ's work, and then we shall have the companionship of our Lord, who will sustain us and uplift us to God, declaring that we are His loyal friends. He will not forget us. God will not forget us. Let us not forget God.

30th March—*Review.*

E. H. P.

SIX MONTHS IN A GERMAN PRISON CAMP.

(Continued.)

By Rev. Percival Godding, Second-Lieutenant.

III. Thoughts and Feelings.

I told you of the wearisome journey to our camp. There was a certain amount of peaceful relief felt when at last we had come to a real, and probably permanent, camp. But the relief was but a passing consolation. Shut in there day after day, week after week, and then month after month, with no communication from the outside world . . . think what it must have meant for many. One officer told me he was to have been married on that very day of our arrival. Then he thought of his bride receiving the War Office telegram with that terrible word, "missing." Another was just about to go home because he had heard his wife was seriously ill. Another . . . but why tell all? You know of life's tragedies. In this camp they seemed perhaps more vividly outlined. Time hung on the hands of most . . . and they had nothing to do but idly to dwell on these things. The lack of nourishing food, and the presence of our overbearing captors. Irritability set in . . . we had to sit and sleep in rooms with the same persons day in, day out . . . with colleagues not of our own choosing; and we all know about the incompatability of temperaments. It is true

> Stone walls do not a prison make,
> Nor iron bars a cage,
> Minds innocent and quiet, take
> That for a heritage.

But the quiet mind is not a universal possession.

Surely here was needed, if anywhere, the consolation and encouragement of religion. Now we could discover, if we had not done so before, the real meaning of religion . . . what it can do for the real—the INNER man. A C. of E. (Church of England) Chaplain had been captured with us. After we had been there two days he announced his service. A room was granted us. I was unable to attend first day. I went the second. I did not say to myself—"C. of E.," it did not enter my mind even, just then. I just felt a great longing to share in public worship with others in the same peculiar straits as myself. So I went. There were just six inside (two hundred and fifty in our camp then)! The Chaplain had his Service Book with him. He read the prayers therein. He read "The Absolution or Remission of Sins." He recited the Lord's Prayer, and then the "Apostles' Creed," and pronounced the Benediction. At first I was bitterly disappointed, for here in this camp was soil absolutely ready for good seed, and conditions that would mightily aid its growth. But, after reflection, one understood. Official religion, or severe "orthodoxy," was far, far from the needs of men. That Chaplain had failed, either through lack of imagination, or through too close an adherence to the "letter" of his Church. The un-Biblical creeds, and the un-Christ-like confessions of faith, where hungering sincere souls are, must always fail. It is the exceptional man in orthodox Churches who is able to help his people. The man, let us speak quite plainly, the man who is better than his Church's creed!

A fortnight later (officers were constantly coming and going), being without a chaplain, friends asked why I did not conduct services. So it was arranged, and an artist wrote out the notice, and asked me to sign at the foot. I did, and appended "Unitarian" to his word "minister." The effect on my friends' faces was really amusing but, to cut a long story short (for it is a long story), I "carried on" only on condition it was known I was an Unitarian.

And so the good work began, and it went on until our Thanksgiving Service for the Armistice. At first our services were held every day, until illness laid me up for a week (have you ever tried a diet of cabbage for a month?), and after we had three services per week—one on Wednesdays and two on Sundays. Splendid attendances, and oh,

such wonderful congregations—men eager to ponder over the true worth and meaning of life: men anxious to feel their kinship with the great Spirit, and to speak to Him words that came spontaneously from the heart. Save to "clear the air" occasionally, we did not discuss what we thought of Jesus—I mean how we placed him in the economy of God—but we attempted to be loyal to His principles. You know the text: "Not every one that saith, 'Lord, Lord,' . . . but he that doeth the will of my Father." I shall never forget our first service. Having no hymn books, half a dozen of us had met just before, and from memory wrote out two hymns—three copies of each, hence 18 hymn sheets. (We had two or three hundred sheets before the Y.M.C.A. sent us hymn books). Our text was from the Master's reply to the Samaritan woman at the well: "Not on that mountain, or at Jerusalem shall the Father be worshipped, . . . but in spirit and truth." In other words (remember my audience), is God to be met with in a C. of E. place, or Weselyan Chapel, or Presbyterian Meeting House, or Moslem Mosque, etc.? And as an auxiliary text, and in the spirit of the Master, we quoted a famous "atheist" as orthodoxy called him: "The world is my Church, to do good my religion." There is no need, as my readers are Unitarian mostly, to tell all this at length, but I do want you to know that here we proved the value of what we are proud to have called Unitarianism—the profound but simple teaching of Jesus. We never attacked any Church—only insincerity and hypocrisy. One said (a Captain in the R.A.M.C.) of our services: "Well, I had hazy notions about Unitarianism, but whatever it is, it is jolly good Christianity."

Later we had help, in religion and camp sports, from the Swedish Y.M.C.A. But it is so interesting I must tell you of that in our next.

Reports.

Ballyclare.—A splendidly attended Social was held in the church on Thursday night, January 2nd, to welcome the minister on his safe return. The ladies and members of the choir had prepared a very good tea. Then followed a most enjoyable entertainment. Mrs. Moore, the talented organist and well-known singer, assisted by Miss Malone and Miss Nelson rendered some good solos and duets. Recitations were given by members of the Sunday School and by the Minister. During an interval Mr. Gillespie, the respected treasurer, made a happy presentation speech. At the opening he contrasted their meeting of that evening and their last meeting, when they were bidding good-bye to Mr. Godding, as he left them to face the dangers and hardships of the battlefield. They all felt proud of his courage. They were more than glad to welcome him back; and also were proud of Mrs. Godding, who through many weeks of anxiety had never lost hope, and had shown great courage. He then formally presented the Minister with a handsome organ, which the members of the congregation felt would be a gift alike to be shared by himself and Mrs. Godding. In reply, accepting the splendid gift, Mr. Godding said their kindness was overwhelming. He referred to the ordeal of the battlefield, facing the enemy and his guns; it also was a great ordeal on that occasion to face his people and thank them adequately for their gift, and the kindly feelings which had prompted it. Mr. Gillespie had referred to their last meeting. Well, the clouds had passed away, and they were now in the sunshine. He could not tell all he had come through. It was not, he thought, for those at home to know all. He had faced the dangers of the enemy's guns, and had also had the humiliating experience of being a prisoner in the hands of the Germans.

* *

Cairncastle.—Two very successful and enjoyable meetings were held in the Schoolroom on January 14th and January 16th. The first was a party for the children and young people of the Congregation given by the minister and his wife. After games of all sorts, tea, and more games, the party ended by a magic

lantern display and a distribution of small gifts. The merry party dispersed about eight o'clock, and had a dry walk home by bright moonlight.

On Thursday, January 16th, the Annual Meeting of the Congregation was held after tea, the business part of the proceedings was gone through, the Treasurer's and Secretary's reports were read, the former showing a balance on the right side. A report of the Sunday School was also given. Reference was made to the loss the Congregation had sustained by the death of Miss Ellen Hunter, the last of the Hunter family of Windy Hill, always staunch and generous supporters of the Old Meeting House. Games, dancing, and several competitions followed, Mrs. John Park carrying off the ladies' prize in both the ninepin and quoit competitions, and Mr. James Lusk and Mr. Robert Topping the gentleman's. Upwards of 40 views of Unitarian churches were exhibited and admired, and some very fine stereoscopic views of Palestine were shown.

It is many a day since a social gathering of the Old Meeting-House Congregation has been so largely attended as that which was held in their School-room on Tuesday evening, 18th February. The congregational households were well represented for their own part, and there were quite a number of invited guests representing four other religious communions besides. Harmonious and amicable as the people of the Old Meeting-House always are among themselves, they had clearly assembled in a more than usually happy frame of mind, with which their friends were as clearly in a sympathetic mood, for the whole company were glittering, not with brilliants, but with smiles—like the enchanted people one sees in advertisements sipping cups of somebody's "delicious cocoa." When all had been further cheered by cups, not of delicious cocoa, but of excellent tea and by capital home-made cakes, Mr. M'Clelland, of M'Keestown, was moved to the chair, and forthwith revealed to any unenlightened person (who might have been there) the secret of the good will glowing on every side. It was not the pleasant anticipation of receiving any material source of happiness for themselves, but the purpose of presenting their minister and his wife with a tangible proof that their services for the Old Meeting-House had been appreciated. With refinement of feeling which characterised his address throughout, Mr. M'Clelland studiously refrained from all mention of the form selected for the token referred to, namely, a fat little bundle of Treasury notes contained in a velvet receptacle. He said (modestly omitting to mention his wife) that Miss M'Meekin and Mrs. James Maxwell had been the two ladies who, not content with the mere speech, or even thought, at which so many people are wont to stop, had proceeded to action, and taken upon themselves the principal share in the work of bringing that company together and in collecting the contributions as well. He called upon Miss M'Meekin to make the presentation, which she did with a kindly little speech, putting the gift into Mrs. Thompson's hand. Mrs. Thompson returned thanks in a few words of overflowing gratitude. The minister, in returning thanks for his own part, said that to tell the truth he had not been taken by surprise, not even by the present, nor even at the form it had taken, for, although he had not seen any of them let the cat out of the bag, he had caught sight of the bag itself, and had seen it moving, and had even guessed the colour and the kind of the cat within, conjecturing that it would be a smoky white one, or a golden yellow, or a silvery grey one, but in any case a long-haired purse-y—un of some sort. He then proceeded to preach a sermon, finding fault with his friends for having done what they *didn't* ought to have done and for leaving undone a weightier matter. This produced such gravity in the audience that he became anxious and alarmed lest they should suppose him not duly grateful for their kindness, and he seemed willing, if only he knew what it might be, to do or say anything (short of unsaying what had made them so grave) to enable them to recover their spirits: that fortunately they speedily did for themselves

without any trouble. After that, until one o'clock, there were songs and dances and a competition game invented and constructed for the occasion, called "circulating ball," and bearing a slight resemblance to the game of golf (but confined within the edges of a table eight feet long). The songs were sung by the Misses Cambridge, Buchanan, and N. Crawford, and by Messrs. James M'Clelland and Robert Crawford. There were also gramophone selections provided by Miss O'Neill, of the Moat Farm.

* *

Clough.—The Clough Unitarian Congregation held a bazaar in Seaforde Courthouse, by the kind permission of Major Forde, on the 6th inst., in aid of the U.V.F. Hospital for Limbless Soldiers. The weather was somewhat inclement, yet the function was well patronised by friends from far and near. It was opened by Mrs. Kelly, Dunmurry, at 3 p.m. Among those present were—Mrs. Forde, Miss Cromie, Mrs. Magill, Mrs. and Miss Porter, Mrs. Sinclair, Miss Scott, Mrs. Philipson, Revs. J. A. Kelly (Dunmurry), J. G. Pooler, R. Philipson, R. Scott, M. Watkins, and J. Stewart; Mr. G. Allen, J.P.; Mr. S. C. N. Lowry, and Mr. Hugh Dickson.

Work Stall—Mrs. Hay, Mrs. S. Robinson, Miss Donnan. Assistants—Mrs. W. Kirkpatrick, Mrs. Cusack, Misses S. Donnan, B. Ferguson, A. Ferguson, Murphy, C. Bryans, N. Thompson, Mrs. W. MacKenzie, Masters W. and J. Hay and A. and M. Robinson.

Utility Stall—Mrs. Haslett and Mrs. H. Robinson. Assistants—Mrs. Huddleston, Mrs. Nesbit, Mrs. Moore, Misses F. Nelson, Ferguson, Murphy, Bryans, M. Huddleston, J. Huddleston, M. Nesbit, J. Nesbit.

Cake Stall—Miss Bell, Mrs. Moss, Mrs. and Miss Nelson.

Refreshment Stall—Mrs. J. M'Cammon, Mrs. Davies, Mrs. Thompson. Assistants — Mrs. Blackburn, Misses E. J. Irvine, A. Irvine, J. Hogg, L. Hughes, C. Thompson, E. Thompson, and Kirkwood.

Half-Hour Concerts were managed by Rev. M. Watkins and Miss L. Irvine (organist). Among the artistes were—Rev. J. G. Pooler, Rev. M. Watkins, Miss Irvine, Mr. Bob Hogg, and members of the K.O.Y.L.I. Concert Troupe, Mrs. Kearney (Downpatrick) acted as accompanist.

Palmistry—Mrs. Dilworth. Shooting Competitions—Mr. Hugh Donnan. Bran Tub—Misses Molly Hay and L. Robinson.

Smelling Competition—Misses M. Campbell, A. Moffatt, S. Mitchell, and Master Willie Wlson.

Stewards—Messrs. S. Larmour, H. Newell, S. Robinson, W. Kirkpatrick, A. Donnan, T. Logan, W. Robinson, W. Hogg, Ferguson, and W. Kennedy.

Special Gifts for Balloting—Mrs. Haslett, tea set; Miss Nelson, lamp; Mrs. H. Robinson, £5 note; Mrs. S. Robinson, eider down quilt and lamb; Mr. W. Kirkpatrick, goat; Miss Bell, a cake; Miss Donnan, game cock and hen and table centre; Mrs. Moore, goat; Mr. J. M'Cammon, £1 note; Mrs. Davies, table centre.

George Allen, Esq., handed in to Treasurer £15 to be divided among three stalls. Up to the present the proceeds amount to £224 clear profit.

A very interesting Musical Service was held in the above church on Christmas Eve, to incidentally assist by its collection that excellent institution, St. Dunstan's Hostel. It is therefore with singular pleasure we report that the Rev. J. D. Davies arranged and composed admirable solo settings for the Advent and Christmas hymns 127, 130, 132, in the N. H., and a quartet setting for 125. The music of the St. Dunstan's Xmas Carol. "They gave their sight" was also specially composed by Mr. Davies, and on being submitted to the musical director of St. Dunstan's, received warm commendation. Mrs. J. H. M'Cammon, Miss Irvine, Revs. J. D. Davies and M. Watkins rendered the solos and quartet, and Miss Irvine and Rev. J. D. Davies presided at the organ. The devotions were led by the Rev. R. Philipson, of Downpatrick, who also delivered a splendid address, and outlined effectively the qualities and virtues of life necessary to build up character after the mind of Christ.

Crumlin.—The Congregation of Crumlin, as they did last year, again this year, presented their minister with a bonus. For this purpose Messrs. Aicken and Craig—members of the Committee—called at the Manse recently and handed Mr. Bowen the sum of £17 10s.

* *

Downpatrick.—Rev. Percival Godding conducted services here on Sunday, 9th February. Before proceeding to the front, Mr. Godding was for some time stationed at Ballykinlar, from which camp he frequently visited Downpatrick, and it was while staying here that he received instructions to proceed to France, and so many friends were glad of the opportunity to congratulate him on his safe return. There were splendid congregations, and in the evening an interesting address was delivered on his experiences as a prisoner in Germany. The collection at each service was exactly the same—£1 9s. 11½d.

On Thursday, the 13th Fecruary, the first Social for our Junior Members was held in the Manse Schoolroom, and a very happy evening was spent. One of the most pleasing parts of the evening was the singing of solos by two of our young ladies—Miss Bell and Miss Rita Cochrane, and by four of our young men—Messrs. Willie Patterson, Jim Hogg, Gerald Black, and Joe Hogg, and also Mr. Robert Hogg, of the Clough Congregation. Our thanks are due to many lady helpers—Miss Meg Cochrane, Miss Chambers, the Misses Bell, and Mrs. Philipson. We now have 76 members on the Junior Roll.

* *

Holywood.—A meeting of the Holywood Total Abstinence Society was held on Tuesday, January 14th. The chair was taken by Rev. G. L. Phelps, and there was a good attendance. Mr. G. London Ward, of the Irish Temperance League, gave a vigorous and interesting address, and during the evening songs were rendered by Miss Battersby, Mrs. Clayton, and Mr. James M'Kisack, and a reading by Miss Praeger. Miss Murphy and Mr. C. J. M'Kisack were accompanists.

The Annual Sunday School Soiree was held on Thursday, January 16th. After tea had been served, an excellent entertainment was provided by Mr. S. Corry. First, some conjuring, then his clever performing dog, and lastly a Punch and Judy show. During the intervals between these performances the younger girls sang part songs, and Misses Snowdrop and Ena Meneely recited. Then came the Christmas tree, with gifts for all the Sunday School scholars.

* *

Killinchy.—The Annual Meeting of the Congregation took place on Thursday, February 13th, at 7 p.m., when a large and representative gathering of stipend-payers and their families assembled in the Lecture Hall and sat down to tea provided with lavish hospitality by the leading ladies of the Congregation. More than usual interest was attached to this meeting owing to the fact that the Church Committee, in response to a circular from the Laymen's Committee of the General Synod, had bound themselves to make an effort to increase the stipend by one-third. It is gratifying to record that for the last half-year of 1918 an increase of £27 3s. 6d. has been paid to the minister, thus more than fulfilling the promise of a 50 per cent. increase in the annual stipend. A deputation from the Laymen's Committee was present, consisting of the Moderator, the Right Rev. Alfred Turner, and the Clerk, the Rev. G. J. Slipper, and Mr. J. M. Andrews. The minister occupied the chair, and, in an introductory speech, explained the objects of the meeting, and urged on the members the vital importance of a living interest in the affairs of the Church and personal devotion as a worshipping congregation. The Secretary read the balance sheet for the past year, showing an income of £277 15s. 4½d. with a balance in hands of £34 4s. 9d. on the year's working. The Committee and officers were elected for the ensuing year. The business disposed of, the meeting settled down to hear addresses from members of the deputation. If the collection given is an indication, then the addresses must have reached the mark [illegible]ney

were listened to most attentively. The Moderator was at the top of his form, and in a speech of sustained interest and power indicated the work our Churches have to do, and succeded well in showing that our own members are the folk to do it. The Clerk, while he felt that the Moderator had largely covered the ground, found certain things to say which were voted well worth saying. Indeed his speech was a happy delivery much commented upon. We were fortunate in having a layman so well known in the district of the calibre of Mr. Andrews to speak to us. The quiet and impressive dignity of his address went home with singular power to an audience having first hand knowledge of his worth. The consciousness that the realities he emphasised were exemplified in his life and character told with great force. We trust that new life and vigour will animate this Congregation as a result of these impressive addresses. If our General Synod could only establish a permanent Laymen's Committee to look after the affairs of our Churches it would be the best work it has hitherto accomplished.

The Annual Tea Party and Prize-giving was held on Saturday evening, January 18th. A bountiful tea was supplied by the ladies and teachers and a good gathering of parents and members assembled to enjoy the performance of two plays given by the children: the first, a musical play, entitled: "Cinderella," which had cost much trouble and patience to get up, and the second, entitled: "Curly Locks." The children acquitted themselves in creditable fashion in both. Prizes for regular attendance and general Prizes for regular attendance and general good behaviour were given to practically all the children on the roll.

* *

Moneyrea.—Our Annual School Party was held on Xmas night. As usual, a large number of friends assembled to witness the programme provided by the scholars. Added pleasure was experienced this year from the knowledge that peace prevailed. The children's action songs were very appropriate. Prizes were presented by Mr. A. K. Stewart. In his address to the children, Mr. Stewart referred to the influence his early training in Moneyrea had had upon his own life. As scholar and teacher he had spent many years in school work, and to look back over those days constituted a great joy. He congratulated the school upon having an increased number of prizes for regular attendance. We wish to place on record our indebtedness to those who provided us with tea and entertainment; to Mr. Millen and Miss M'Clune; also to our pianist, Miss Minnie Kennedy. Our door receipts were over £16. The singing of the National Anthem brought a very enjoyable party to its close.

On Friday evening, January 17th, a large audience met in the Lyttle Memorial National School to hear a lecture by the Rev. A. Whitford, entitled: "My Experiences in France." The meeting was organised under the designation: "An Evening in Aid of War Nurses' Benevolent Fund," which explains its object. The lecture, lasting about an hour and a quarter was listened to with intense interest as Mr. Whitford related and described life in the trenches and on the battlefield, giving an exhibition of a gas mask and how to use it, and when he donned the "tin hat," which happened to be a German helmet, no better disguise need be desired by any minister. An excellent tea was dispensed by a few of the ladies; and, after according the lecturer and teamakers a hearty vote of thanks, and acknowledging our obligations to the Rev. Mr. Philipson, of Downpatrick, who conducted worship during Mr. Whitford's absence.

* *

Raloo.—Our Church has lost another member by death—Miss E. Knox, of Ballyvallough. She was a member of our Church from the beginning. She was taught in our Sunday School, and was also a teacher in it for a long time. She took a deep interest in the Church, and was always ready to help with any scheme that was for the good of the members or Sunday School. She never married, but lived with her brother,

Charles, all her life. She was kind and generous in her nature and reliable. Our sympathies go out to Mr. Knox in his bereavement.

Our Sunday School Examination took place on 25th January. Mrs. E. Thompson, of Cairncastle, was the examiner. She also listened to the recitation: "Excelsior," from Longfellow's poem, and awarded Miss J. Craig's prizes to the successful competitors in connection with our Sunday School.

Another of our old members has passed away at an advanced age—Mrs. J. M'Calmont. Our sympathy goes out to her children and grand-children in their bereavement.

Raloo Congregation held their Annual Business Meeting in the Church on 17th February. The Treasurer presented his statement of accounts, which showed that our funds are all in a healthy condition. The minister thanked the Secretary and Treasurer for the very great pains and trouble they took with our Church affairs. At the close of the meeting the Treasurer, Mr. Gray, said it gave him great pleasure to present the Rev. J. and Mrs. M'Cleery with a pocket book, well lined with Treasury notes which the Congregation had subscribed most willingly. The Rev. J. M'Cleery replied, and thanked them all for their kindness, and said this was a very great surprise, and placed him under a deep debt of gratitude to them all, after which the meeting closed.

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